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Exhibit Materials

Latinos in Knox County

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November 2015

### LiRA Brochure (English Version)

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#### Recommended Citation

"LiRA Brochure (English Version)" (2015). *Exhibit Materials*. Paper 5.  
<https://digital.kenyon.edu/lkcaexhibit/5>

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## 1. Circular Journeys

While it might be logical to conceive of migration as a one-way occurrence, this is not the case for Latino immigrants. The proximity of many Latin American countries to the United States, the strong ties that exist between extended families, and the rich cultural identities of many Latino immigrants all contribute to what we call circular journeys—Latinos' continual physical and emotional connection between their homelands and the United States.

*"I came here when I was about maybe eight, and then went back to Mexico when I was about fifteen, sixteen, then came back. When my kids were growing up, I took them to Mexico for three years ... so they got the Spanish completely, and a little bit of Mexican culture."*

-José Ávalos, owner of Fiesta Mexicana restaurant, Mount Vernon

## Want to Learn More?

Latinos in Rural America seeks to broaden knowledge of, engagement with, and understanding of the Latino experience in rural Ohio.

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[www.kenyon.edu/academics/departments-programs/latinoa-studies/lira](http://www.kenyon.edu/academics/departments-programs/latinoa-studies/lira)

## Latinos in Rural America (LiRA)



### Stories of Cultural Heritage, Values, and Aspirations

Latinos in Rural America offers an intimate window into the lives, journeys, and aspirations of Latinos in Knox County, Ohio. Latinos (people of Latin American origin living in the United States) share many traits with other immigrant communities. Most importantly, they see this nation as a place of opportunity to advance in life through honest hard work and to provide a better future for their children. Latinos are distinctive, however, in their devotion to preserving a distinctive cultural identity and their willingness to share it with those whom they meet in this new homeland.



Amneris Pérez-Román



José Ávalos



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Kenyon College

This project was made possible with support from Ohio Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Digital Scholarship program, the Mount Vernon–Knox County Community Foundation, and the Kenyon College Summer Scholars program.



## 2. A Sense of Place and Displacement

Latinos in Knox County experience both a sense of place and a sense of displacement. They belong to the larger community, yet belonging also involves traveling through unsettled territories, exploring what for many of them is new, and transplanting what they brought with them: family values, culture, and stories.

*“We [Puerto Ricans] are a migrant community that is continuous, that doesn’t only cross oneway; one crosses in both directions and on multiple occasions. And that creates, to a certain extent, a life experience in which one doesn’t belong to one place. If there were a country for the misfit toys, you know, that’s where I would feel okay.”*

-Ivonne García, associate professor of English, Kenyon College, Gambier

## 3. Values and Culture

Family, education, faith, and food culture constitute the defining values for Latinos in rural Ohio. Despite the distance separating Latinos from their countries of origin, this population makes a priority of holding on to their cultural roots.

*“Just like any Latino, my family instilled in me the value of family first, the value of becoming successful, achieving my desires, and always doing my best to try to help.”*

-Vanessa Ávalos, raised in Mount Vernon, now a college student at Ohio State University, Columbus

## 4. Intercultural Identities

Despite the tension between assimilation to United States culture and preservation of Latino cultural identity, Latinos feel strongly that being intercultural enriches their lives.

*“[Biculturalism] just gives you a broader picture of the world. It just helps me see the world in a better way.”*

-Gigi González-Cottrell, lieutenant for the Salvation Army, Mount Vernon

## 5. Visibility/Invisibility

Both invisibility and hypervisibility characterize Latino daily experience. Some Latinos experience both simultaneously: they feel hypervisible because of their distinctive physical appearance, occupation, or status, yet they remain invisible due to their culture’s lack of representation in the community.

*“I feel, being at a place like Kenyon, that strives to be more diverse, that I have a responsibility to be visible in that side of my identity and who I represent.”*

-Balinda Craig-Quijada, professor of dance, Kenyon College, Gambier

*“I am not invisible. I am always present, but no one wants to talk to me [laughs]. And you know, for me, I like to get along with all people, but well, not everyone likes me, because of my clothing or because I am always working.”*

-Female agricultural worker, Mount Vernon

## 6. Dreams and Aspirations

The immigrant story is a powerful narrative founded on a hope for a better life. Individual dreams of pursuing future careers, and a father’s simple but powerful wish that his children attend college, characterize Latinos’ aspirations for the future.

*“Of course, why not, like every Latino, why not go pro? But first I want to go with school. I want to find a college that I know I can do well in soccer. I’m in the nation of opportunity, so I know I should take one of those opportunities.”*

-Mario Álvarez-León, middle school student, Mount Vernon

*“I want to become a nurse, a registered nurse, and that’s my dream. I find [agriculture] very important; it has taught me a lot about what my parents go through, and it has made me appreciate them a lot more because it’s not easy being out there in this hot weather and it’s really tiring.”*

-María Esmeralda Villa, high school student, Mount Vernon



Vanessa Ávalos



Mario Álvarez-León



Balinda Craig-Quijada



María Esmeralda Villa